Justin Ellis  
Artistic Administrator/Pops Programmer  
National Symphony Orchestra  
Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts  
CCM Arts Administration Class of 2011

What have you been up to since graduating from the Arts Administration program?

Since graduating from the MBA program, I have been associated with three different orchestras, the Virginia Symphony, Hartford Symphony, and National Symphony Orchestras. All of my work has been in the Artistic and Operations departments of orchestras.

How did UC’s Arts Administration program affect your career path?

The most valuable aspect of the arts administration program was the broad range of knowledge you obtain. Having even just a basic understanding of how all the departments in an organization work, knowing the language they speak, and understanding their needs was fundamental to me advancing rather quickly.

Where do you see yourself professionally in 5 years?

I hope that within the next 5 years I am still working at a high level organization in artistic planning. At that point, I hope to be creating innovative, cross discipline programs that reach a very broad audience.

What makes you excited to go to work every day?

Working at an arts organization that is seen at an international scale inspires me to come to work every day. Being at the Kennedy Center, I am exposed to and involved with products and programs that are viewed around the world. The work that I do contributes to a national dialogue on the Arts in America.

What professional accomplishment are you most proud of?

One of my proudest professional accomplishments occurred very recently. The NSO has a week of programming that exists in one neighborhood a year, called In Your Neighborhood. A majority of the activities are small ensembles: chamber music, playing lectures, coaching, etc., but three of the week’s events are full orchestral performances. I was tasked with creating an orchestral program for a night club. A cavernous 3,000-capacity night club. I was not given a lot of parameters, but more of a general notion of what people would be excited to see. After several months of planning and countless revisions, I crafted a very effective program that incorporated a Beatbox/Multi-Instrumentalist, Electric Cellist, and DJ with the orchestra. The program was a smash success. We received a lot of positive feedback, and had a couple of very nice reviews.

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